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**General and complete disarmament:**

**Confidence-building measures in the regional and subregional context**

**Relationship between disarmament and development**

## Letter dated 17 September 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Peru to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you the attached letter from the President of the Republic of Peru, Alan Garcia Perez, addressed to the Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Defence participating in the meeting of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) (see annex).

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda items 96 (h) and (o).

(*Signed*) Gonzalo **Gutiérrez Reinel**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Peru to the United Nations

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## Annex to the letter dated 17 September 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Peru to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

### The Year of National Union in the Context of the External Crisis

Lima, 14 September 2009

The Union of South American Nations must consolidate its efforts through themes and actions that give it credibility with the peoples of the continent, thereby fulfilling its objectives of affirming peace, development and poverty reduction.

There is currently one urgent matter that is essential to the achievement of those objectives: halting the arms race through a mechanism for transparency and confidence-building and the commitment of all members to a Military Non-Aggression Pact, recognizing that UNASUR represents an overall mechanism collectively to guarantee that objective. In the future, our countries surely will constitute an interposition force for peace that will prevent any military conflict among us and guarantee that the situation will turn around before any armed action and without waiting for instructions from institutions outside South America. This major objective, like the progressive establishment of a South American Defence Force to repel any external threat to our territory, will be our theme for the near future.

But we already have a South American Defence Council that should monitor cooperation agreements with outside powers to see that in no case, whether through technology or strategy, can they be used for aggression against another country of the region. Its most urgent and important action must be to ensure transparency and accountability of military spending and purchase of new resources and technologies. We all know the secret that only the major arms dealers and their corrupt brokers benefit from it. Therefore, in order to prevent competition in arms, expand integration through confidence-building and apply the better part of our resources to reducing poverty and the immense inequality among social groups in our countries, Peru proposes that the South American Defence Council should study each country and make public the amount of military spending for maintenance of military bases and troops as well as ensure transparency in new purchases. We must put our cards on the table. Otherwise, both UNASUR, which has been in existence for five years, and the South American Defence Council will be meaningless.

Because in the past five years, since the establishment of UNASUR, our countries have allocated for military spending a total of $156 billion, but in addition, with budgetary resources and credits they have acquired over these five years approximately $23 billion more in new weapons, cannons, aircraft and ships. Our armed forces number about 1.5 million, including officers, troops, intelligence services and related activities. In 2005 military spending was $26.9 billion; in 2006, $29 billion; in 2007, $32 billion; in 2008, $34 billion, and this year it could reach $38 billion. This absurdity must stop.

It is important to know that if $23 billion had not been allocated to buy new weapons and if costs over the past five years for the normal operations and maintenance of troops and resources had been reduced by 15 per cent, we would have had the funding to bring no fewer than 30 million South Americans out of

poverty, figuring that over the past five years $40 billion would have been allocated to them.

If UNASUR and the South American Defence Council cannot manage this, the people of the continent will ask themselves, "well then, what good are they?"

The greatest problem is that the situation is getting worse. It is true that we are separated by ideologies and that we still disagree on some historical disputes and claims. But none of this can lead us irrationally into war. The sole response needed could be the commitment to a Military Non-Aggression Pact, the decision of UNASUR to be an interposition force and a South American defence force against external threats to our territory. Moreover, our ideological disputes can be settled through respect for each country's sovereignty, and through the adoption of peaceful, legal solutions for the settlement of disputes, which is already happening.

If we do not act immediately, in the next five years, as reported in the press and in global bodies, we will have spent another $35 billion on new equipment and the running costs of maintenance during that period also will have increased to over $200 billion. And yet, in the next three years we have already contracted to buy 11 conventional submarines and one nuclear submarine, 67 warplanes and 135 combat helicopters, 350 tanks, 20 missile systems and 15 multipurpose radar units. With good reason the people of South America will refuse to have us continue to talk about integration while countries are arming themselves against each other or strengthening their capacity for domestic coercive action.

The Quito meeting is of enormous historical importance to guarantee confidence, peace and integration, and to ensure that our South America is a nuclear-weapon-free zone. The continent is counting on you and on the maturity of UNASUR.

Alan **Garcia**
President of Peru